

LEVEL 1 - 5 OF 10 STORIES

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HEADLINE: TODAY'S TOPIC: women Accepted By Men After Decade at Princeton

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DATELINE: PRINCETON, N.J.

BODY:

Egad! The walls will crumble! The ivy will wither! How dare women defile the hallowed halls of Princeton?

Ten years of coeducation at the Ivy League school have soothed the fears expressed by many disgruntled Princeton men, both students and alumni, who vociferously opposed the enrollment of women.

It was 1969 when 101 female freshmen arrived on campus and checked into the stone and leaded-glass dormitories. Women now make up one-third of the 4,400 students. A 1978 survey of students indicated just 1 percent would prefer a single-sex school.

"The problems we had freshman year were usual freshman problems, not those associated with coeducation," recalled Georgia Nugent, who recently returned to Princeton as an assistant professor of classics. She is the first female graduate to return to teach.

"The Princeton of the '60s was a macho kind of place, like most male institutions of the time," said university spokesman Jim Merritt, a 1966 graduate. "The presence of women had a mollifying effect on the atmosphere.

"Coeducation has made Princeton a more desirable place to go. Now it's a very normal atmosphere," he said. "That's very striking to anyone who returns from the all-male days. I don't think all the dire predictions have come to pass."

Initially, alumni groups led by Concerned Alumni of Princeton argued for the existing "character of the place" and the "special spirit," recalled Merritt. But by the mid-'70s, they changed their minds and agreed coeducation has been a very good thing for Princeton.